

Case 2605

***Euryotis brantsii* A. Smith, 1834 (currently *Parotomys brantsii*; Mammalia, Rodentia): proposed conservation of the specific name**

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Abstract. The purpose of this application is the conservation of the specific name *brantsii* A. Smith, 1834 for a small southern African rodent. The name is threatened by a senior subjective synonym, *Arctomys vigil* Thunberg, 1811, unused since its proposal.

1. Carl Peter Thunberg established the name *Arctomys vigil* (p. 308) in his important revision of South African mammals published in 1811. He referred to an animal occurring in the Karroo, about the size of a rat, with a tail about one third of body length, with two rodent-like incisors, no canines and 'many molars' — obviously a reference to the laminae of the cheekteeth. The sloping burrow was open to the outside and the animal was frequently found sitting in front of it. Apart from tail length, which is closer to half body length, this description and particularly the habitat information leave no doubt that the animal referred to is that currently known as *Parotomys brantsii* (Smith, 1834).

2. Although not completely forgotten, Thunberg's paper was rarely cited, even in the 19th century (Rookmaaker, in press). The name *Arctomys vigil* itself has never been used in primary zoological literature since its proposal.

3. *Euryotis brantsii* was established by A. Smith (1834, p. 150). It was described again later (Smith, 1840, pl. 24) with the addition of a coloured plate.

4. *P. brantsii*, otherwise known as Brants' whistling rat, is a common animal in the western and northern Cape Province, south Namibia and south Botswana, and is regularly mentioned in the literature. The name *brantsii* A. Smith, either in the original binomen or in the currently recognised *Parotomys brantsii*, has been the only name consistently used. A list of references is held by the Commission Secretariat.

5. The International Commission on Zoological Nomenclature is accordingly asked:

- (1) to use its plenary powers to suppress the specific name *vigil* Thunberg, 1811, as published in the binomen *Arctomys vigil*, for the purposes of the Principle of Priority but not for those of the Principle of Homonymy;
- (2) to place on the Official List of Specific Names in Zoology the name *brantsii* A. Smith, 1834, as published in the binomen *Euryotis brantsii*;
- (3) to place on the Official Index of Rejected and Invalid Specific Names in Zoology the name *vigil* Thunberg, 1811, as published in the binomen *Arctomys vigil* and as suppressed in (1) above.

References

- Rookmaaker, L. C. (in press) The taxonomic importance of C. P. Thunberg's revision of South African mammals (1811). *South African Journal of Science*, (in press).
- Smith, A. 1834. African zoology. *South African Quarterly Journal*, 2: 145-160.
- Smith, A. 1840. *Illustrations of the zoology of South Africa*... 51 pls. Smith Elder and Co. London.
- Thunberg, C. P. 1811. Mammalia Capensia, recensita et illustrata. *Mémoires de l'Académie Impériale des Sciences de St. Petersbourg*, 3: 299-323.